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Sovetskaya Etnografiya, No 4, 1950.

THE YAZ 'VA KOMI PEOPLE OF THE USSR

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There are about 4,000 people who speak a dialect of the Komi language, different from both the Komi-Permyak and Komi-Zyrvan dialects, living in Krasno-visherskiy Rayon, in the northeast part of Molotov Oblast. The majority of the Komi people live in the Komi ASSR and the Komi-Perm National Okrug.

The Komi population of Krasnovisherskiy Rayon lives in a small compact group on the Yaz'va River, a left tributary of the Vishera. Administratively they form the Verkhneyaz vinskiy Section (kust) of Krasnovisherskiy Rayon (the rayon is divided into three sections: Visherskiy, Nizhneyaz-vinskiy, and Verkhneyaz'vinskiy). A broad belt of Russians along the Vishera and the Kama and its tributaries separates the Yaz va Komis from the other Komi people.

The Yaz'va Komi settlements are located in the middle and, in part, in the upper reaches of the Yaz'va River, beginning about 30 kilometers from Krasnovishersk, the rayon center. Krasnovishersk is a new city, grown up during the Soviet period, and is located in the middle of a thick pine forest on the bank of the Vishera.

The Yaz'va River is a small but swift mountain stream with small rapids. In places there are deep pools and whirlpools. It has its source in one of the offshoot ranges of the central Urals, called by the local Komis "Kvarkvozh" (Kvark Range). In the region around the Yaz'va Komi settlements, travel on the river is possible only by small boat, and to go upstream it is necessary to pole or use tow ropes.

Verkhneyaz vinskiy Section, within the boundaries of which the Yaz va Komis live, consists of six village soviets (Bychinskiy, Verkhneyaz'vinskiy, Timino-Bel'kovskiy, Talavol'skiy, Antipinskiy, and Van'kovskiy), with 54 populated points in all. Of the 54, only seven are located on the left side of the Yaz'va. These are: Talitea (also called Yevsina, or Vil'va) derevnya (village), on the Vil'va

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River; Sysoyeva, Abramova, Aksenova, and Nefedova derevni, on the high left bank of the Yaz'va opposite Antipina; and P'yankova and Pud'va derevni, on the Mel' River and its tributary, the Pud'va Stream (rechushka). The remaining 47 populated points make up a compact group of settlements extending for 35-40 kilometers along the Yaz'va and its right tributaries. The distance from one populated point to another ranges from one half kilometer to 5 kilometers.

Almost all of the small area where people live can be seen from Paleva derevnya, Bychinskiy Village Soviet. Paleva is located on a high hillside on the right bank of the Yaz'va. The edge of the forest recedes here, and from this point on up the river to the village of Antipina kolkhoz fields, broken here and there by wooded areas, stretch out along the hillsides. On the horizon rises Antipina would are the village of the same name is located. On clear days Cherdyn', with its ancient churches, can be seen from Paleva with the naked eye.

The whole Verkhneyaz vinskiy Section constitutes an island in the middle of the thick forest. Thirty kilometers of woods -- spruce for fir/ (Picea), pine (Pinus) and birch (Betula), aspen (Populus tremula), and rare varieties of cedar (Cedrus) -- lie between it and Krasnovishersk. There are two Russian settlements along these 30 kilometers, Yaborovo and Parma (the latter founded during the Solice period), while near Krasnovishersk there is a third, Suyankova derevnya.

Konovalova derevnya is the last populated point on the Yaz'va; beyond it there is nothing but virgin forest.

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In their own tongue the Yaz'va Komis call their language "Komi," but when speaking Russian they refer to it as "Permyak." They usually call themselves "Permyaks," not "Komis," although when possible they try to avoid the issue altogether, as the term "Permyak" carries a somewhat derogatory connotation. The neighboring Russian population calls them "Permyaks."

Geographical proximity and close contact with the Russian population has had a great influence on the language of the Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Komis. Some speak Russian exclusively, others Komi exclusively, while in between there are a number of bilingual groups. Roughly, the whole population of the Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Section can be divided into four linguistic groups:

- 1. People using Russian exclusively. These people do not understand Komi at all. This group includes Kislovo, Mokhovo, and Ivachino derevni, Bychinskiy Village Soviet, and comprises 62 households with a population of about 280. These people are part of Russian, part of Yaz-va Komi descent.
- 2. People using predominantly Russian. Russian is spoken in the home. The majority of the adult population understands Komi, and some speak it, but the children for the most part, do not know the language at all. This group may be termed bilingual Russians. For the most part the people are Yaz'va Komis who have come to speak Russian, but some are Russians who have settled there and learned Komi as a second language. This group includes Nizinyaya and Verkhnyaya Bychina, Gilëva, escond language. This group includes Nizinyaya and Verkhnyaya Bychina, Gilëva, Churilki, and Sredneye Pole derevni (i.e., all of Bychinskiy Village Soviet Palëva, Churilki, and Sredneye Pole derevni), comprising 120 households with a popuexcept the above-mentioned Russian derevni), comprising 120 households with a population of about 540; and Zarechka, Gortsa, and Kichigina derevni and Verkhneyaz'va selo (village), Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Village Soviet, comprising 63 households with a population of about 280.
- 3. People using Russian in the home, but where the adult population is bilingual. The adults are perfectly fluent in both Komi and Russian, and the children understand Komi, though they do not speak it. These people are mostly of Komi descent, and the group may be termed bilingual Komis. This group includes Sheremeteva

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(Verkhnyaya and Nizhnyaya) and Dubrovka (Verkhnyaya and Nizhnyaya) derevni, Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Village Soviet, comprising 80 households with a population of about 360; and P'yankova and Pud'va derevni (in these two there is a significant Russian element), comprising 46 households with a population of about 200.

4. People using Komi in the home. These people are Komis, but the overwhelming majority of the adult population knows Russian. This group includes the remaining 36 populated points, comprising 677 households with a population of about 3,040.

Thus, at present in Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Section there are about 3,600 persons who speak the language of the Yaz'va Komis fluently and at the same time are familiar with the local colloquial Russian. This includes about 75 percent of the population of the section. Comparison with statistics from previous surveys indicates that there has been no great change in the Yaz-va Komi population of the area over the last 40 years.

The following table gives a breakdown of the village soviets by populated points and the population of each.

See table on following page.

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## Linguistic Breakdown

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				Populated points	Households	Population	Populated points	Households	Population	Populated points	Households	Population	Populated points	Households	Forulation	Populated points	Households	Population	. <del>5</del>
CONFIDENTIAL		r	Village Soviet  Bychipskiy	9	182	820	3	62	280	6 4	120 63	540 280	2	80	360	1	29	130	GONFIBEN
	ا بر	Ħ	Verkhneyaz 'vinskiy	8*	172	770				7	05					9	144	650	
TWEG	1	Ð	Timino-Bel'kovskiy	9	144	650										12	190	850	
ĬĀĪ	Æ	·	Talavol'skiy	12	190	850							2	46	200	7	166	750	
			Antipinskiy	9	212	950										7	138	660	
			Van'kovskiy	7	138	660									-(0	36	667	3,040	50X1-HUM
			Total	54	1,038	4,700	3	62	280	10	183	820	4	126	560	30	001	64	
			Percent of total population			100			6			19			11	anlar 7	ກດກນີ		

<sup>\*</sup> Sic. The figure given for total populated points in Verkhneyaz'vinskiy Village Soviet is 8, but only 7 populated points are listed in the linguistic breakdown. This makes a total of 54 populated points in the total column, as against a total of 53 in the linguistic breakdown column.

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